

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Ronan Carroll Ph: 5150 4434 / 0428 539 303



28 June, 2021

Keeping water bills down

East Gippsland Water is pleased to announce no increase to the average customer bill over the next 12 months.

This is in line with the organisation's commitment to provide customers with affordable water and sewerage services. It will also continue to maintain high levels of service, while absorbing increases in any external business costs as much as it can.

East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Steve McKenzie, said, "As a state government-owned enterprise, and an essential service provider, we have to ensure our customers receive reliable and high-quality water and sewerage services. We also have to make sure that these services are provided efficiently and represent good value for money.

"It means the average residential customer, using 146kL (146,000 litres) of water a year, will actually see their combined bills for water and sewerage decrease slightly by \$2.74 overall for the 2021/22 financial year – going down from \$1,202.28 to \$1,199.54. The cost will be even lower for those consuming less water and higher for those consuming more.

"Over the next 12 months we are also looking to invest around \$13.2 million in a major capital works program. This will involve replacing or upgrading ageing infrastructure and takes into account regulatory requirements, long-term projections for population growth and climate change. Key projects include:

- constructing a new 430,000 litre water storage tank at our **Buchan** Water Treatment Plant, to boost the resilience and reliability of the water supply to the town. This is being funded as part of the Victorian Government's \$2.7 million *Building Works* stimulus package
- completing the refurbishment of our 4.5 million litre water storage tank at **Metung** – extending its operational life by 25-30 years
- upgrading the capacity to use gas generated at the **Bairnsdale** Wastewater Treatment Plant to generate electricity. This will help offset our energy consumption at the plant and contribute to our carbon reduction targets
- continuing with an ongoing program to replace sections of ageing water mains in **Bairnsdale, Paynesville, Nowa Nowa, Orbost and Marlo** - helping to ensure the long-term reliability of these water supply networks.

"We will also be spending around \$21.5 million for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of existing water and sewerage infrastructure."

Other specific customer priorities and preferences covered by East Gippsland Water's five-year business plan for 2018-23 are being maintained. These include: providing grants to local schools and community groups for environmental projects; bill rebates for outdoor community-run, not-for-profit recreation groups; and, maintaining current levels of financial assistance to customers experiencing genuine financial difficulty paying their water bills.

Ends